

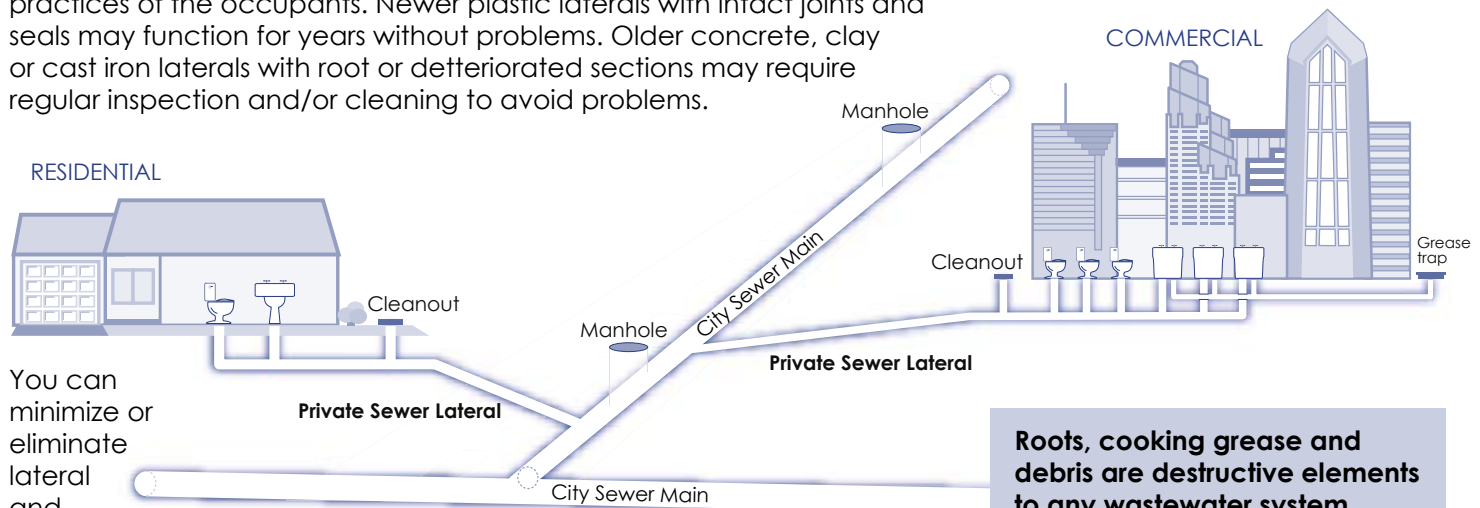


## General Information

A sewer lateral is the pipe that connects all the sinks, drains and toilets in your home or building to the City sewer main, which is generally located in the street.

As a property owner, you are responsible for maintaining the lateral. Responsibility includes keeping the lateral clean and clear of any obstruction, such as roots, grease or other debris.

Lateral maintenance is highly dependent on the age and type of lateral (ie. plastic vs. cast iron) and the practices of the occupants. Newer plastic laterals with intact joints and seals may function for years without problems. Older concrete, clay or cast iron laterals with root or deteriorated sections may require regular inspection and/or cleaning to avoid problems.



You can minimize or eliminate lateral and main

stoppages by being careful of what you dispose of in your drains and garbage disposals. Fats, oils and grease can clog lateral, and eventually the sewer mains, and should be disposed of properly. (See text box on right for more information.)

If your drains start to run slowly, there's a good chance you have some sort of obstruction in your lateral. Usually, it can be cleared up by a licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist.

After clearing the lateral, the plumber may want to examine the condition of the pipe by televising it. If the plumber finds the lateral broken or finds a blockage in the lateral that is so tough it cannot be cleared, the lateral needs repair. Responsibility of the repair depends upon the location of the problem.

If the problem is beyond the property line and in the City right-of-way, the plumber should call the City's Sewer Emergency Line at (619) 515-3525. A dispatcher will ask the plumber to describe the nature and location of the problem. This is called filing a plumber's report. City crews will then investigate within 24 hours and if necessary, repair the pipe. The City does not charge the property owner for this repair nor does it charge the plumber to file a report.

However, if the problem is between the house and the property line, the property owner must make arrangements to have it repaired at property owner expense. The repairs can generally be accomplished by a licensed plumber or contractor.

If you need more information on the City's sewer lateral policies, visit our website at [www.sandiego.gov/mwwd](http://www.sandiego.gov/mwwd) or call the Metropolitan Wastewater Department's Public Information Office at (858) 292-6484.

**Roots, cooking grease and debris are destructive elements to any wastewater system.**

**Roots, cooking grease and debris problems in a sewer lateral are the responsibility of the property owner.**

**Keep your lateral free of anything that may inhibit the flow and lead to a possible sewage spill. To avoid problems with:**

**Roots:**

**Use a root inhibitor available at most hardware stores or schedule it for periodic mechanical cleaning.**

**Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG):**

**In addition to frying pan grease, fats and oils can also come from salad dressings, butter and mayonnaise. Put FOG in the trash and not down the drain.**

**Debris:**

**Be careful what you put down the drains. Items like toys, disposal diapers, toilet paper, and feminine hygiene products can cause blockages.**

\*This information is not applicable to encroachment laterals or laterals that connect to easement mains.



## Questions & Answers

*Q: There is a bad odor coming from my drains. Who do I call?*

**A: For sewer odors restricted to the inside of the home or building, call a licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist, many of which are listed in the local yellow pages. For sewer odors outside of the home or building, call the City of San Diego's Water and Sewer Emergency Line at (619) 515-3525.**

*Q: Sewage from my sewer lateral has backed up into my home or building. Who do I call?*

**A: For assistance with sewer backups, call a licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist, many of which are listed in the local yellow pages. You will need to select and hire this person or company yourself. The City of San Diego cannot make a recommendation.**

*Q: Sewage has spilled from my cleanout and into the City right-of-way. What should I do?*

**A: Control and contain the spill, as much as possible, with sandbags, dirt or cat litter. Turn off the water, if necessary. Then call the City of San Diego's Water and Sewer Emergency Line at (619) 515-3525. A crew will investigate and determine who is responsible for the costs of clean up. If the spill is the result of a blockage or a collapse of the sewer lateral on your property, you will be responsible for the cost of clean up.**

*Q: Sewage has spilled from my cleanout and onto my property. What should I do?*

**A: Control and contain the spill, as much as possible, with sandbags, dirt or cat litter. Turn off the water, if necessary. Then call a licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist, many of which are listed in the local yellow pages. You will need to select and hire this person or company yourself. The City of San Diego cannot make a recommendation.**

*Q: My plumber tells me there is a blockage in my sewer lateral. What should I do?*

**A: If you have an obstruction in your lateral, it should be cleared up by a licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist, many of which are listed in the local yellow pages. If the plumber finds the lateral broken or finds a blockage in the lateral that cannot be cleared, the lateral needs repair. Responsibility of the repair depends upon the location of the problem. If the problem is beyond the property line and in the City right-of-way, the plumber should call the City's Sewer Emergency Line at (619) 515-3525. If the problem is between the house and the property line, make arrangements with the licensed plumber or contractor to repair it.**

*Q: My plumber says the City requires a property line cleanout. Is this true?*

**A: No, the City of San Diego does not require property line cleanouts.**

*Q: My plumber says the City charges for plumber's reports. Is this true?*

**A: No, the City does not charge to file a plumber's report.**

*Q: My plumber says the City will reimburse me for the expenses I incurred. Is this true?*

**A: No, there is no reimbursement for plumbing expenses. You are responsible for the maintenance of your sewer lateral. The City of San Diego will only repair at no charge to you the portion of the lateral that lies beyond the property line and in the City right-of-way.**

### Sewer Laterals Street or Alley Main Connection\*

Property owners are responsible for maintenance of the sewer lateral from the point where it connects with the home or building to the point where it connects with the City sewer main. Maintenance includes:

- Keeping the lateral free of any obstruction, such as roots, grease or debris
- Repairing the lateral up to the property line

The City of San Diego will repair a break or collapse in the lateral, if it is beyond the property line and in the City right of way.

\*This information is not applicable to encroachment laterals or laterals that connect to easement mains.